



News for employees, retirees & partners



Region Names Pagosa RD *District of the Year*

PAGOSA SPRINGS - The Pagosa RD has been named *USFS Rocky Mountain Regional District of the Year*. District Ranger Kevin Khung traveled to Denver this month to accept the award honoring him and his staff for outstanding efforts in 2012.

One of their major accomplishments was providing extensive support leading to the designation of Chimney Rock National Monument, the Region's first National Monument.

Kevin and his staff conducted extensive local and regional community outreach, including consultations with 25 Native American tribes. They helped coordinate public meetings and events, and hosted dignitaries leading up to and after the designation.

In 2012, the RD also brought to fruition many years of work on a long-term stewardship contract that sets a national example for fuels reduction, forest restoration and renewable energy.

The contract will remove up to 45,000 tons of hazardous fuels each year across 2,000 acres of the San Juan NF in the wild-land urban interface.

The material will feed a power plant that will be able to generate up to a third of the electrical power needs of Pagosa Springs, while offering local jobs.

Meanwhile, the RD was busy all summer managing



LEFT-RIGHT: USFS Assoc. Chief Mary Wagner, USFS Chief Tom Tidwell, Pagosa District Ranger Kevin Khung, San Juan NF Supervisor Mark Stiles, Acting Deputy Regional Forester Craig Bobzien and Rocky Mountain Regional Forester Dan Jiron at the ceremony for recipients of the 2012 Regional Forester's Awards in Denver this month.

the Little Sand Fire, the largest wildfire ever to occur on the District, burning almost 25,000 acres of the San Juan NF.

The firefighting effort was remarkable in terms of its safety record, low cost relative to size, extent of community involvement, and restoration of thousands of acres of ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests.

- Ann Bond

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Allen Honored by Region

DURANGO - San Juan NF Civil Engineer Allen McCaw has been named Rocky Mountain Region 2012 *Managerial Engineer of the Year*. In 2012, Allen was Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) on four construction projects valued at more than \$3.6 million on the San Juan and Rio Grande NFs, including the Vallecito Dam Bridge.

"Allen was recognized for balancing simultaneous projects, establishing relationships with local contractors, and for designing and providing support for multiple projects," says San Juan NF Staff Engineer Ben Martinez.

Allen has been the San Juan's Capital Improvements Project Manager; Trail, Bridge and Dam Program Leader and COR on construction projects since 2001. His first job on the San Juan was as a seasonal working in trail, timber, recreation and fire in 1988.

In the 1990s, he worked for Bioremediation Technologies, handling design and construction of hydrocarbon removal methods, and for Wilson and Company designing interstate highway interchanges, pedestrian bridges and roadway intersections.

Allen holds a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Wyoming, is a Certified Bridge Inspector and Level III COR, and member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and Engineers without Borders.

- Ann Bond



Linda is Retiring

DURANGO - Linda Knipp, San Juan NF Budget Officer, will retire this spring to join her newly retired husband Dave Crawford in enjoying some camping and travel.

A Durango native, Linda arrived on the San Juan NF in 1971 after graduating from Durango High School. Her first permanent position was Mail Clerk. She worked as Clerk Typist until 1975, when her first son was born.

In 1981 Linda returned as the San Juan's Timber Clerk. During the 1980s, she also worked as Fiscal Clerk and Assistant Computer Specialist.

In 1990 Linda's title changed to Budget and Accounting Analyst, a position she held until 1998, when she became Computer Programmer Analyst. Linda was promoted to Budget Officer in 1999.

During her 42 years on the San Juan NF, Linda has worked for nine Forest Supervisors, and through three different financial systems and several reorganizations.

"It has been a fun and interesting career," she says. "I've always viewed my job as being here to help make everyone's job easier, trying to help employees spend more time in the field."

Linda and Dave have raised four children between them; Bucky, who lives in Bayfield; Cody, who lives in Durango; Kristina, who lives in Castle Rock; and Karry, who lives in Flagstaff. They have nine grandchildren between them, ranging from five to 17 years old.

"The people who work for this agency and this forest are the best in my opinion. They are dedicated to their jobs and caring for the land," Linda says.

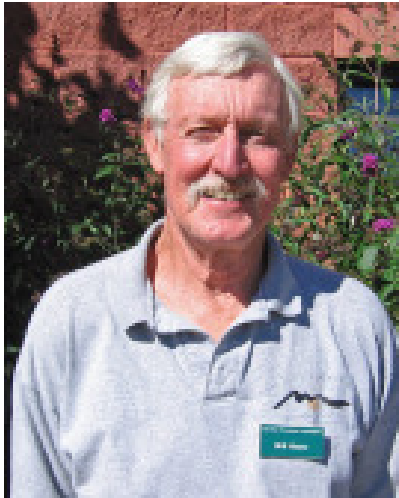
- Ann Bond

Keepin' up with the Jones



DURANGO - Kate and Cody Jones are the proud new parents of Henry David Jones, born March 2, 2013 at eight pounds, four ounces. The couple says their new son is growing like a weed and is happy and healthy. Congratulations!

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Remembering Bill

DURANGO - Former San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA) Visitor Information Specialist Bill Hayes passed away on April 1st from pneumonia. Bill was 72 and had been diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's disease five years ago.

Bill and Kathe Hayes, SJMA Volunteer Coordinator, had been married since 1974. "He was loved by all who knew him," Kathe says. "Bill had a great fulfilling life and did everything he wanted to do."

Bill was born in Knoxville, Tennessee, and graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1962 with a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education. He went on to earn a Master's degree in Education Administration. In college, Bill was on the UNM football team, and then spent nine years teaching and coaching in Albuquerque schools.

In Durango Bill coached football, swimming and softball at Fort Lewis College for 30 years. He was inducted into the FLC Hall of Fame in 2000 upon his retirement.

From 2004 to 2008, Bill worked for SJMA at the PLC helping visitors and employees. He enjoyed hunting, fishing, backpacking, photography and music.

"Bill was a wonderful human being, and we were so fortunate to have him on the visitor services team," says Alan Peterson, SJMA Visitor Information Specialist. "He could answer just about anything about the local public lands he enjoyed and loved."

"Bill didn't know the word 'no' when it came to helping out SJMA," says Susan Bryson, SJMA Director. "Kathe would drag him along on her work projects, and he never complained and always had a smile on his face."

"Bill was my right-hand man for my SJMA projects," Kathe says. "He always wanted to help out as much as he could. He was missed when he became ill and now will be missed forever." Memorial contributions can be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 701 Camino del Rio, Suite 115A, Durango, CO 81301.

- Ann Bond

Hotshots are Back on Duty



DURANGO - The 2013 San Juan Interagency Hotshot Crew has been training at the PLC in recent weeks.

We become available for national fire assignments on April 19 and will be together until early October, depending on the fire season.

The average age of our current crew is 30; our youngest crew member is 22, the oldest is 37. The sum total of years of everybody's fire experience is 149 years. Seasonal crew members are from Colorado, Maine, New Mexico, Tennessee, Kansas, New Hampshire and Utah.

- Jay Godson,

San Juan Interagency Hotshot Crew Superintendent

Back Row L-R: Scott McCreary, Jon Cordes, Martha Schoppe, Kevin Lindner, David Draayer, Kodi Leslie, Ryan Corman, Jay Godson, Lance Martin

Front Row L-R: Keith Bedonie, Walter Chan, Sarah Barry, Tonya Ansel, Nate Christiansen, Jacob Birdsell, Scott De Velder, Cole Ingraham, Zack Freundlich

Missing from photo: Andrea Drinkhouse, Devin Shannon, Roy Vega

Interagency hotshot crews are teams of career and temporary agency employees who are multi-skilled professional firefighters. Crews are employed by the USFS, BLM, NPS, various Native American tribes, and Alaska and Utah. Their physical fitness standards, training requirements and operation procedures are consistent nationwide.

COLUMBINE RANGER DISTRICT



Goodbye to our *Jim of All Trades*

BAYFIELD- Jim O'Neil, who has worked in Developed Recreation for the Columbine RD over the past 13 years, retires in May. Jim began his federal career in 1962 with the U.S. Navy. He went to work for what he terms "Corporate America" in 1966, and by 2000, was happy to take a GS-04 position in Developed Recreation.

Jim's career experience included rock-and-roll bass guitarist, insurance agent, cook, bartender, bread truck driver, electronic technician, machine shop inspector and healthcare positions.

Jim has been a licensed insurance underwriter, contracted forest firefighter, historical society grants writer, technical writer, bio-medical equipment technician for an open heart surgery team, medical compliance officer, healthcare facilities plant and construction manager, certified literacy tutor, certified for OSHA train the trainer and his favorite, Columbine Forestry Technician.

Jim holds a degree in English Literature from U.C. Bakersfield, California. He enjoys gardening, history, archaeology, wildlife biology, running, hiking, skiing and traveling. He and wife, Mary, have five grown children and 10 grandchildren.

"Thank you everyone for all the kindness you have shown me over the years. This has been the best 13 years of my life," Jim says. - Ann Bond



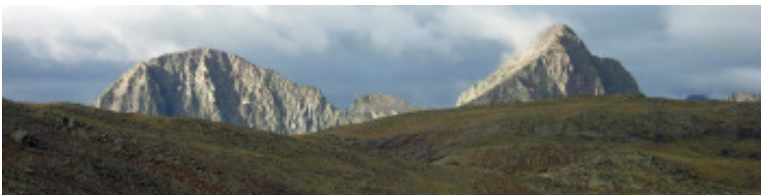
Sully Details into Wilderness

BAYFIELD - Craig Sullivan, Columbine Fuels Forester/Silviculturalist, is covering Wilderness Specialist duties this summer, helping to manage and administer the Weminuche Wilderness, Piedra Special Management Area and winter dispersed recreation on the Columbine Ranger District.

"I look forward to learning something new and contributing to the program," he says.

Craig began his federal career in the early 1990s as a recreation intern on the Chequamegon NF in Wisconsin. He went on to work in timber and forestry on the Kootenia and Carson NFs, in addition to a stint with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Tennessee.

Craig is a certified silviculturalist and holds a Bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management from the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point. He and wife, Danielle, have two children, Ethan and Charlie. - Ann Bond



Ranger History



L-R: Matt Janowiak, current Columbine District Ranger; Pauline Ellis, former Columbine District Ranger; Mike Johnson, former Pine District Ranger; and Ted LaMay, former Animas District Ranger.

PAGOSA RANGER DISTRICT



CRIA Recognized Far and Wide

PAGOSA SPRINGS - The Chimney Rock Interpretive Association (CRIA) received widespread recognition this year for helping the Pagosa RD manage Chimney Rock National Monument.

CRIA was named both *Partner of the Year* by the U.S. Forest Service and *Non-Profit of the Year* by the Pagosa Chamber of Commerce for 2012.

CRIA volunteers have provided daily tours at Chimney Rock seven days a week from May through September since 2003.

"This partnership elevates awareness about a remarkable

archaeological resource and contributed to its designation as a National Monument," said USFS Chief Thomas Tidwell in announcing the national award.

About 12,000 tourists visit Chimney Rock each year, contributing an estimated \$95,000 to \$175,000 to the local community through heritage tourism.

"Chimney Rock is an economic driver and attraction in our community," stated the Chamber in announcing its local award.

CRIA's 80 volunteers are trained annually and coordinate other regional cultural sites, including Mesa Verde, Crow Canyon and Canyon of the Ancients. The nonprofit also hosts special programs to promote understanding of the Ancestral Puebloans, provides free tours to students and sponsors academic programs.

"We are honored to accept these awards and appreciate the support we receive from the staff of the San Juan," said Susan Yalom, CRIA Board of Trustees President. "We look forward to continuing this close relationship and are extremely gratified by the special recognition."

CRIA volunteers also function as site stewards, keep bathrooms open, conduct trail maintenance and maintain emergency training certifications.

- Wendy Sutton



Chimney Rock Receives Transportation Grant

PAGOSA SPRINGS - A grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) *Transit in the Parks Program* will soon provide alternative transportation for visitors at the newly designated Chimney Rock National Monument.

The \$140,000-grant will be used by the San Juan NF to purchase three full-sized passenger vans to be used to transport visitors from the base area of the National Monument to the summit parking area. This will help reduce safety and resource impacts along the steep winding road. The Chimney Rock Interpretive Association will cover operation and maintenance costs for the shuttle service, which will be implemented as soon as possible.

In addition, the FTA *Public Lands Transportation Scholar Program* will fund a graduate student to study overall transportation needs at the new monument this summer. Recommendations may include expansion of the lower parking lot, upgrades to the road to the summit, methods for successfully running the shuttle service, and opportunities for reducing road maintenance costs.

Decisions on new parking facilities and other improvements will ultimately be addressed in the Chimney Rock National Monument Management Plan.

- Pauline Ellis

PAGOSA RANGER DISTRICT



Pagosa RD Assistant Engine Caption Chuck McAlexander blacklines a road in a 1,400-acre prescribed burn unit in Alabama last month.

Pagosa Crew Heats up the South

PAGOSA SPRINGS - Pagosa RD fire crew members Ryan Vincent, Chuck McAlexander and I traveled to the Talladega NF in Central Alabama for a couple of weeks in early March to help conduct prescribed burning on the Oakmulgee RD.

Ryan and I were Burn Bosses, while Chuck was Firing Boss. We found that burning in the Deep South can take place under much higher humidity than the Arid West, and that flames die down much quicker there.

The USFS conducts prescribed burning on more acreage in Region 8 than in any other part of the country, and the practice is culturally accepted and encouraged by much of the population there.

The historical fire regime of the southeastern U.S. consisted of frequent understory burns, so the agency schedules its maintenance burns on a three-to-five year rotation. Goals for this burn were long-leaf pine restoration and red-cockaded woodpecker habitat improvement.

Burning in the South is a major part of most resource objectives, including timber, wildlife and hunting, so everyone on a district works together to conduct burns because it furthers the goals of so many different resource areas.

- Fred Ellis



SOUTHWEST PUBLIC LANDS PEOPLE

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DOLORES RANGER DISTRICT



Ashton Leaves for East Coast

DOLORES - Ashton Hargrave, Dolores RD Forester, is moving to Campton, New Hampshire, to become Supervisory Forester/Assistant District Ranger for the White Mountain NF.

He'll be supervising timber sales and vegetation management, including project NEPA, sale planning and prep, appraisals, contracts, KV/BD projects, reforestation, monitoring and accomplishment reporting.

Ashton began his USFS career in 2001 as a seasonal Forestry Technician on the GMUG NFs Gunnison RD. In 2005, he moved to the Pike and San Isabel NFs Leadville RD as a temporary Forestry Technician.

In 2008, Ashton landed a permanent position as Forestry Technician on the Dolores RD. In 2010, he was promoted to Forester.

Ashton holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Colorado State University, a Master's degree in Mineral Economics/Operations Research from the Colorado School of Mines and Master's degree in Forest Science from Colorado State University.

- Toni Kelly



Dayle is New BLM Range Tech

DOLORES - Dayle Funka was recently hired as the new BLM Tres Rios Office Range Technician. She came down from Afton, Wyoming, where she worked most recently as a Soil Conservationist for the NRCS. Dayle has also worked as a Biological Science Technician for Rocky Mountain National Park and as a Supervisory Forest Technician for the GMUG NFs Norwood RD.

Dayle holds a Bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Management and Range Ecology from Colorado State University.

She and husband, Matt, enjoy boating, fly fishing, horse/mule packing and bird hunting with their Gordon setter, Abe. Dayle also enjoys gardening.

"I am excited to have the opportunity to dive into the range program here and learn the area," she says. "I also look forward to working with range permittees and the other resource specialists here at the DPLO."

- Toni Kelly



Harold's on Permanent

DOLORES - Harold Park, who has been a seasonal DPLO Range Technician for the past 10 seasons, was recently selected for the permanent Range Technician position.

Harold served in the US Navy in the 1960s. He later became a business owner on the Front Range and opened two commercial fire alarm shops in Denver and Colorado Springs. His love of the outdoors brought him to western Colorado where he has been riding the range since 2003. Harold's hobbies include horses, martial arts, three daughters, seven grandchildren and one great grandson.

"I'm really excited about the range program and look forward to all the challenges this program has to offer, and not least of all, spending time in the saddle in the back country."

- Toni Kelly